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The fourth in a series of teacher education units on the disadvantaged pupil discusses Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Appalachians and Southern white migrants, and American Indians. It is noted that the Negroes and whites are members of a subculture of the dominant culture, whereas the Spanish background and Indian pupils are products of different cultures and are faced with the added problem of straddling both cultures. The two Spanish background ethnic minorities share a number of characteristics but teachers should also be aware of the differences. The Puerto Ricans, for example, are urban and not so strongly tied to their cultural roots as the Mexican Americans. The Indians, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans are also educationally handicapped by their foreign language background. The whites are more indifferent to schooling and present greater discipline problems. Assimilation and acculturation are probably hardest for the Indian students whose cultural background is the most different from that of traditional education. A summary, discussion questions, and a bibliography are included. For other units in this series see UD 005 367, UD 005 366, UD 006 842, UD 007 191, UD 006 841, and UD 005 472. (NH)

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Unit Four
January 1, 1967

Other Culturally Disadvantaged Groups

ONE-YEAR

SCHOOLWIDE PROJECT

GRADES K-12

By Kenneth R. Johnson

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TEACHING CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

(Grades K-12)

by

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UNIT IV: THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED MEXICAN-AMERICAN, PUERTO RICAN, CAUCASIAN, AND AMERICAN INDIAN PUPIL

(January 1, 1967)

Fourth of Eight-Unit Series Appearing First of Each Month
From October 1, 1966, Through May 1, 1967

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PREFACE

One of the foremost challenges in American education today is that of educating the culturally disadvantaged pupils. To help them achieve in school, it is necessary for educators to understand them and their problems. This SRA extension service, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, for grades K to 12, is specifically designed to help teachers understand the culturally disadvantaged, to offer suggestions and techniques for teaching the culturally disadvantaged, to stimulate thought and promote discussion among teachers of the culturally disadvantaged, and to serve as a guide to the really valuable writing and research on the problem. For several years, SRA extension services have been used by thousands of educators as a framework and background resources for monthly in-service meetings, emphasizing study of problems related to classroom teaching.

This series, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, is being offered for the first time in 1966-67. Each monthly unit deals in a concise, nontechnical manner with one phase of the subject. While this extension service is primarily designed for use in in-service education meetings, its comprehensive coverage and many practical suggestions for regular classroom teaching can also be valuable for private study by individual educators.

The following units are included in this series for 1966-67:

UNIT ONE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part I (October)
UNIT TWO: The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part II (November)
UNIT THREE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Negro Student (December)
UNIT FOUR: Other Culturally Disadvantaged Groups (January)
UNIT FIVE: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part I (February)
UNIT SIX: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part II (March)
UNIT SEVEN: Improving Language Skills of the Culturally Disadvantaged (April)
UNIT EIGHT: Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Culturally Disadvantaged Students (May)

The author of this series is Mr. Kenneth R. Johnson, Consultant, Division of Secondary Education, Los Angeles City School Districts, Los Angeles, California. For the past year he has specialized in the problem of educating the culturally disadvantaged, particularly the problems of teaching language and reading. He has conducted numerous institutes and lectures on the disadvantaged student at teacher workshops, conferences, and the colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area.

Born in a disadvantaged area of Chicago, the author worked in the post office for five years and served two years in the army before attending college at Wilson Junior College, Chicago Teachers College, and the University of Chicago (B.A., M.A.). He has done graduate work at San Jose State

College, and is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Southern California. All of his teaching experience has been in schools that had culturally disadvantaged populations.

We urge the school administrator or other educator receiving this extension service on Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils to assign to some one interested and competent person or committee in your school the responsibility for making the best use of each unit.

The booklets in this extension service will arrive about the first of each month, October through May. This issue contains Unit Four. We hope it will provide valuable help and practical information to those involved in education.

Dorothy Ericson
Project Editor

Paul T. Kosiak, Director
SRA Educational Services

January 1967

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UNIT FOUR: THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED MEXICAN-AMERICAN, PUERTO RICAN, CAUCASIAN, AND AMERICAN INDIAN PUPIL

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Four groups that (along with the Negro) are virtually the total disadvantaged population will be discussed in Unit Four. These groups are Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Appalachian and Southern rural white immigrants, and American Indians. The purpose of Unit Four is to point out some of the implications for education caused by the unique experiences of disadvantaged pupils from each of these groups. Like the Negro, discussed in Unit Three, each of these groups has unique factors that make its deprivation different from other groups.

In Unit One, it was pointed out that deprivation is not synonymous with particular ethnic or minority groups. There is, however, a close relationship: the ethnic groups discussed here and in the preceding unit are comprised of a majority of individuals who are disadvantaged. That is, individuals from these groups are often not able to participate in the dominant culture. Thus, an individual's chances of being disadvantaged are increased if the individual is a member of one of the five ethnic groups discussed in this and the preceding unit.

The Appalachians or Southern rural whites who have migrated to the cities are, like the Negroes, products of a subculture that does not adequately prepare them to participate in the dominant culture: they are products of a relatively distinct but not totally separate culture. Their way of life is a dulled and distorted reflection of the dominant culture.

The Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians, however, are products of different cultures--ways of life that work in another time and place, but not in this time and place. Individuals from these cultures are really, then, culturally different; and the difference between their culture and the dominant culture makes them disadvantaged. Furthermore, too many Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians are handicapped by all the forces of deprivation outlined in Units One and Two. Thus, they are both culturally different and culturally disadvantaged.

The term "subculture," when applied to these groups, does not mean quite the same thing as it does when it is applied to Negroes, Appalachians, and Southern whites. The cultures developed by these ethnic groups are derivatives of the dominant American culture; the cultures of Mexican-Americans,

Puerto Ricans, and American Indians are different cultures. These different cultures have been influenced and changed by the dominant American culture because individuals from these cultures are part of the whole American scene. In this sense, the term "subculture" can be applied to these groups; however, it is important to remember that these cultures are not derivatives of the American culture.

The focus of Unit Four will be on some of the cultural differences that create problems in educating Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and American Indian pupils. In addition, the Appalachian and Southern rural white immigrant pupils will be discussed in terms of the handicap these pupils bring to school from their subculture. Finally, all of these disadvantaged pupils, regardless of ethnic membership, are contained within the framework of deprivation outlined in Unit Two.

PART II: THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT[1]

Few teachers really understand the cultural background of Mexican-American students; consequently, few teachers work effectively with these students. The actions of teachers are too often guided by the stereotyped image they have of Mexican-American students, that is: Mexican-Americans are naturally undependable, irresponsible, indolent, dirty and unhealthy; they have questionable moral standards; they refuse to learn English, and they stubbornly cling to their native Spanish; they refuse to help themselves, and they ignore educational opportunities; they are taciturn and laconic.

This stereotype is deplorable, but understandable, because most teachers have only a limited and narrow access to information about what a Mexican-American student is in terms of his own culture. An understanding of the Mexican-American student in terms of his culture will help teachers get rid of the stereotype and see the Mexican-American student for what he is--a product of his cultural background.

Mexican-American students are a combination, a reflection, and a product of a variety of characteristics that are tempered by their generation as American citizens, their economic status, the educational level of their parents, their personal and familial ambitions, etc.

Many Mexican-American students are the descendants of an agrarian folk culture and, as such, they have grown up in tradition-bound homes in which their families have had limited experiences in civic affairs, no real sense of social responsibility, and a strong tendency to preserve the agrarian Mexican culture. The more recent the students' introduction to American urban society, the more marked will be the differences between their values and attitudes and the values and attitudes of the dominant culture. Some of the "new" urban values are in direct conflict with the values that made survival possible in an agrarian society in Mexico. Some of the conflicts between the opposing value systems involve the meaning of life itself.

Mexican-American students are young people in a state of ambiguity. They find themselves trying to straddle two different cultures. This situation is more complex than the situation of many Negro students and culturally disadvantaged white students: culturally disadvantaged Negro and white students are products of a subculture (a way of life that deviates in degree from our dominant culture); Mexican-American students are products of an entirely different culture (a way of life that differs in kind from our dominant culture). As Mexican-American students try to adjust to the dominant culture of America, they sometimes create problems in both their homes and

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[1]With acknowledgment to Phil Hernandez, Consultant, Los Angeles City Schools.

schools. Many Mexican-Americans are unable to reconcile the differences between their culture and the urban-oriented dominant culture of America, and they are unable to make an adjustment. As a result of this conflict, many students grow to feel that they belong to neither culture--that they have no real identity. To complicate matters, many Mexican-Americans are victims of social and economic discrimination, and they share the label of second-class citizenship with Negroes.

Mexican-American students are aware of the stigma of second-class citizenship. They learn very early in their lives (as many Negro students do) the subordinate role the dominant culture has assigned to them. Too often, they develop the feeling that they deserve the subordinate role assigned to them. The lack of emphasis placed on competition in the Mexican-American culture may contribute to this feeling; however, the feeling may also be a result of a kind of self-hate or low expectations reinforced by disproportionate numbers of people like themselves who are kept at the bottom of the social scale.

The School and the Teachers

The school and curriculum present many complex difficulties to Mexican-American students who speak only Spanish when they enter school. At school they are expected to learn to speak, read, and write English from teachers who, in most cases, can neither speak Spanish (which would help them to identify the linguistic conflicts between Spanish and English that inhibit the learning of English) nor understand the methods of teaching English as a second language. In addition, most teachers do not understand the cultural background of Mexican-American students and the educational implications of this cultural background. Thus, teachers have little or no empathy with the students' problems and conflicts when the students are suddenly forced to become bicultural.

Origins of Mexican-American Students

Sometimes, in attempting to eliminate a stereotype, another may be created. This is the danger here: in dispelling the stereotype, an equally inaccurate image of Mexican-Americans can be created.

Mexican-American students can come from any one of seven major groups, each having a great deal in common with the others but, also, each having a great deal not in common with the others. These seven major groups are:

1. They may be descendants of early California or Texas families.

2. They may be second or third generation offspring of families who came to this country as political refugees during the Revolution of 1910-1920.

3. They may be second or third generation offspring of families who came to this country as agricultural contract laborers during World War I.

4. They may be the children of braceros, or farm workers, who have recently come to this country.

5. In California, they may be Tejanos--migrants from Texas.

6. They may be recent immigrants from Mexico.

7. They may be Hispanos, and probably consider themselves more Spanish than Mexican.

Students who are classified under the first three categories (descendants of early California and Texas families, descendants of early political refugees, descendants of early agricultural workers) may be generally Americanized. These students often have little knowledge of their Mexican heritage, and they probably speak little Spanish. Students who are classified under the next three categories generally are Spanish speaking and they tend to hold on tightly to Mexican traditions and customs. Finally, students who can be classified by the last category (the Hispanos) are generally well assimilated, probably due to their usually higher economic status. (There is a question if their higher economic status causes them to classify themselves as a Hispano, or if being a Hispano causes them to be better off economically than other Mexicans, thus facilitating assimilation.)

Regardless of these categories, there are certain cultural factors common to all Mexican-Americans that are important for teachers to understand.

The Family

Most Mexican-American families are a tight patriarchal structure. The father has all the authority, although the mother is the center of the family. When the father dies, the eldest male child inherits the father's authority over the immediate family. Further, within the Mexican-American culture, there is an extended family structure. That is, the family unit includes not only members of the immediate family--parents and their children--but also grandparents, aunts, uncles, and compadres (friends and relatives who can assume parental responsibility over children, or godparents). The Mexican-American child owes his primary loyalty to this family organization.

Knowledge of the family structure of Mexican-Americans gives teachers insight into some of the problems in educating Mexican-American students. For example, the lack of interest often shown by parents and students may be due to conflict created between school demands and family demands. Many teachers have complained that Mexican-American students often exhibit a lack of initiative--they depend on being told explicitly what to do and how to do

it. Perhaps this lack of initiative is due to the subordinate role the individual must assume within the family structure.

An understanding of the Mexican-American family partly explains the excessive school absence rate of many Mexican-American students: the primary loyalty owed to the family often requires students to miss school to fulfill family obligations. Sometimes, the reasons for school absence seem trite to teachers; however, if teachers realize that the demands of the family always come first, regardless of how unimportant these demands may seem to an outsider, teachers can understand some of the reasons for the excessively high absence rate. Of course culturally disadvantaged Mexican-American students are affected by many of the other factors contributing to high absence rates: poor health, lack of clothing, disregard for the importance of education, the failure of the school to meet the needs of these students, etc. The family concept of Mexican-Americans is one more factor contributing to high absence rates.

The Mexican-American family structure very clearly provides the outlines for the roles of female and male members. Thus, Mexican-American children rarely have any doubts about their role. A boy is nurtured on the idea that he is developing into a man, and this means he is macho and must behave a lo macho (to be male) or ser muy hombre (very much a man). In other words, boys are encouraged from birth to develop those qualities that are clearly masculine. This accounts for the bravado in so many young Mexican-American males, the need to defend honor, the urge to establish a masculine image before girls, etc. Mexican-Americans have a word for this: machismo. This clear understanding of identity and the role of the male may also explain why some female teachers have trouble disciplining Mexican-American boys. It may also partly explain why so many Mexican-American boys drop out of school early: a boy is macho if he is working, earning money, and standing on his own two feet.

Mexican-American girls learn their role early in life, also. Essentially, the role of a Mexican-American female is to perform all the duties that maintain the family: take care of the children, cook, clean, and perform all the other countless duties to keep the family going. In performing these duties, the female is always subservient to the male head of the family.

The conditions of modern life--particularly modern urban life--may seriously disrupt or upset the ideal family structure described here. Increasingly, the father is unable to provide an income that will support such a structure, and the mother must go to work. When this happens, the father's machismo suffers and his head position in the family is eroded. The mother, with the new independence she receives as a contributor to the family income, demands a more dominant role in family decisions. Thus, the traditional roles of the parents have been altered, and conflict occurs. The children are greatly affected by this: they lose their sense of security and also a great deal of the parental control when the traditional family structure breaks down. The disintegration of the family unit may also contribute to some of the negative school behavior of some Mexican-American students.

Mexican-American Values

Most Mexican-American students are affected by two basic philosophies that are a part of their culture. These philosophies are expressed in such expressions as: "Dios dirá" (God will tell; or, it is in the hands of God); "Hay más tiempo que vida" (there is more time than there is life). The first philosophy (God will tell) places responsibility in the will of God--health, sickness, life, death, success, failure, wealth, misfortune--everything that affects the life of an individual is in God's hands. God determines what is to be. This concept of life places limitations on planning for the future, developing ambitions or carrying through obligations expected of individuals in our society. It also provides Mexican-Americans with a rationalization for failure. The second philosophy (there is more time than life) complements the first philosophy because it reinforces the justification of limited planning for the future. It encourages procrastination, and it relieves the individual of the pressures of deadlines and promptness; it allows for improvidence--why worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow may not come, if this is God's will.

Philosophically, then, teachers and the curriculum are in conflict with Mexican-American students: an American middle-class point of view does not include such a concept of life. Yet, teachers of Mexican-Americans must understand that the philosophy of life of these students may account for their attitudes on meeting class deadlines, studying for tests, coming to class prepared, attending school regularly, and having concern for the future. Teachers should understand, too, that an attendant part of this attitude is that Mexican-American students will respond better to a reward given as soon as a job is completed. In addition, work that can be finished in a short time will probably be done better than a lengthy job. Thus, short assignments followed by immediate rewards are very important in any instructional program for Mexican-American students.

Attitudes on School and Education

Many Mexican-Americans have an attitude toward schools and education that are contrary to those of the dominant culture. Mexican-American parents often look upon school not as a means to an end but as a requirement imposed on them by the government. They do not generally discuss school in positive and constructive terms with their children. That is, they see their responsibility for educating their children stopping at the door of the school; their children must face the problems of education and adjustment to the different point of view advanced in the school by themselves. The children must overcome the language handicap, understand the new values thrust at them, and find worth in what they are being taught--all this usually without parental support and reinforcement. Further, Mexican-American children must weigh and choose sides in the conflict between the values of their culture and the values of the dominant culture, usually with little

parental guidance. Thus, Mexican-American students must carry the burdens of achievement and adjustment alone. Brighter, mature students can often shoulder these burdens and equal their middle-class peers. But bright, mature students are the exceptions. The majority usually succumb to the frustrations inherent in their solitary struggle. The outcome is that many Mexican-American students decide that they are incapable of achievement, and they classify themselves as inferior. This kind of self-concept often causes antisocial behavior in the school and the community, or it causes Mexican-American students to become withdrawn. In other words, they may become either delinquents or dropouts.

Self-concept in Transition

Teachers often observe that Mexican-American students are taciturn and laconic. The reasons for this are partly explained above; a weak self-image is another reason for this kind of behavior, and teachers should understand the causes for the development of such a self-concept. Mexican-American students have developed a poor self-concept because of the causes described in Unit Two (these causes are common to culturally disadvantaged students). The following causes for developing a poor self-concept, however, should be emphasized: first, Mexican-Americans are labeled as second-class citizens because of their cultural background (especially their language background); second, since they have such a difficult time adjusting to the cultural and intellectual demands of the curriculum, they are labeled intellectual inferiors; third, they receive little understanding from either home or society; fourth, like culturally disadvantaged Negroes, Mexican-American students often live in dilapidated areas that seem to mirror the poor quality of the inhabitants; finally, Mexican-Americans are victims of prejudice and discrimination because of their heritage, socioeconomic level, and their physical appearance (this last point is emphasized for all culturally disadvantaged ethnic groups described in this series, except for the Caucasian, because it is the most important factor that is not being dealt with in all of the mass efforts to improve the lot of disadvantaged groups).

Negative self-concept in Mexican-American students may be, in part, a question of identity--that all-encompassing preoccupation that marks the stage of adolescence. All young people go through a search for identity. The Mexican-American student is no different on this score: they are bombarded by the same advertisements and general commericalism (which is the chief way our society helps individuals discover their identity) as the youth of the dominant culture. But Mexican-Americans are not "Anglos," and they cannot affect some of the "Anglo" fashions, fads, grooming, behavioral patterns, etc., without producing incongruous results. Still, they use the dominant culture as a model. Like all young people, they put emphasis on the facade and physical appearance. They choose many of the "identity labels" from the dominant culture, and these are unconsciously altered to be consistent with the "identity labels" of the Mexican-American youngsters more unlike than like their counterparts in the dominant culture--and this increases their alienation from all sides. Their parents cry, "No somos asi!"

(We are not like that); teachers declare, "No, you don't look right; you have it all wrong!" The disapproving teachers are representatives of the alien culture that has spawned these unacceptably dressed and groomed, and generally mixed-up youngsters.

The Mexican-American Community

Mexican-American students are growing up and developing in what they call "barrios," and what generally are called ghettos. Barrio means neighborhood or community; ghetto is a more fitting term, in this case. Ghetto carries a definite meaning: a quarter of a city in which members of a minority live because of social or economic pressures. Many barrios exist within the ghetto. Mexican-Americans who are born in the ghetto or come to live there at an early age grow up understanding that this is their section, their part of town. Many reach adolescence without ever having left their section of town. These youngsters mature within a circumscribed area of overcrowded housing, poverty, disease, and crime. They see and share their parents' loss of dignity when seeking necessary aid from charitable agencies. When families can afford to move they leave, and behind them remain those people who are least able to function effectively in the complex urban framework. This group, helpless in its immobility, gives the ghetto situation a constant source of strength. Reinforcement is supplied by the continual arrival of immigrants from Mexico and other ghettos. Individuals are trapped because their families are trapped. Besides confirming a feeling of inferiority, the ghetto ironically inculcates a security in its inhabitants that makes them fearful of leaving the community. In the ghetto, their language is the dominant language; their customs are the accepted customs; their food is the most available food in the stores. It is home.

The fear of unfamiliar surroundings is transmitted to the young people who, in many cases, refuse to leave the ghetto for any reason. Some youngsters can find work within its boundaries, but the ghetto offers very limited employment situations, and there is little need to develop skills that would provide greater vocational opportunity. Some, however, will venture out of the ghetto to seek employment. Their initial contact may demonstrate to the prospective employer characteristics based on their feelings of inadequacy and insecurity when they leave the ghetto, which may be interpreted as a lack of interest, a lack of confidence, or weak vocational skills. The employer may be free from prejudice, but he will discriminate for he wishes to protect his business from seemingly harmful or debilitating influences. Thus, the young Mexican-American, outside his element, has encountered what he has feared--discrimination and suspicion. Such attitudes did not exist in his barrio. His reaction to rejection will not be to place blame on himself, on his limitations or self-consciousness. Instead, his reaction will be hatred, which breeds aggression. The form of his aggression may bring him into conflict with the law. The entire encounter will establish further in his mind the certainty of his inability to function adequately in this world beyond the confines of the ghetto.

Applying an Understanding of Mexican-American Students

The foregoing has reviewed a number of characteristics that, in varying degrees, are applicable to Mexican-American young people. There are great numbers to whom such characterization is a gross exaggeration, and great numbers to whom these characterizations are not applicable at all. The latter are probably not culturally disadvantaged. Our concern is with those who are described by these characteristics: the culturally disadvantaged Mexican-American student. These are the young people who need to be reached. These are the ones whose talents and abilities are wasted. These will be the correctional statistics. These will continue to confirm the stereotype. These are the students who have the immediate need for teachers to have insight into their problems through understanding, empathy, and candid introspection.

In conclusion, it might be instructive to describe a typical classroom where the majority of students are Mexican-American. The makeup of this class is thirty-five students--eighteen boys and seventeen girls. On the opening day, the teacher is met by the usual anticipatory syndrome all students present on the opening of school. The teacher notes that the salutation is a bobbing of heads by some, while others will boldly ask, "Who are you? What is your name?" Some will not look in the direction of the teacher, but quietly and submissively find seats. Such behavior of the students should indicate to the teacher that his class is already grouped into three basic parts:

1. The bold children may well be more Anglo than Mexican.

2. The children who merely nod their heads are probably "50 percent Anglo" and "50 percent Mexican" (half assimilated).

3. Those who are submissive and quiet are more Mexican than Anglo.

Between these groups are varying degrees of assimilation. Not as obvious a division as behavioral response is the academic ability of these students. The teacher will have to develop methods that will give real evidence of the individual's ability. Intelligence quotient scores and subject achievement scores available in the counselor's office are generally not an accurate appraisal. Few mental measurement and achievement tests account for cultural factors, experience differences, intellectual opportunities, and all the other relevant factors that make up the difference between the average Anglo child and the culturally disadvantaged child. The teacher, himself, must determine the reading, spelling, and reasoning levels of the students. This is an extremely difficult thing to do, because Mexican-American students do not respond well to formal testing. A test that might be used is one such as this: the teacher reads a short summary and asks the students to select from a choice of words written on the board those words that best tell what the story or summary is about. During the period of their testing (selection), the teacher should be alert to notice those students who cannot write down their words without first consulting a neighbor, either verbally or visually. An important word of caution is that the teacher must not consider

the last behavior a form of cheating, but, rather, accept it as an indication that the student is not really able to respond independently. (It is interesting to note that the Spanish language has no word equivalent to the English word "cheating").

A test more indicative of student ability is one given after the teacher has become familiar with the special patterns of certain students. Completely an individual evaluation, it consists of inconspicuously approaching a child and, through conversation, assessing his understanding of subject matter, directional commands, general vocabulary, and American idiomatic expressions. The group limited in these understandings will be quite small, because most Mexican-American youngsters have developed defensive techniques very early that allow them to function rather adequately in most classroom situations. However, the teacher must not be deluded into thinking that this group is able to apply classroom learning outside the classroom, because there is little true reinforcement of the "learning" that takes place at school: these children will return at the end of the school day to Spanish-speaking homes, to Mexican culture, to a system that does not encourage the child to share his school lessons with his elders who might enrich his lore with personal knowledge and experience. Therefore, in any classroom where a majority of the students are Mexican-American, it is essential that the teacher develop--within the established curriculum--a program meaningful to children of the majority group, not only in terms of the world in which they will eventually live, but also in terms of the world in which they already live.

Such a program will stimulate the children to participate orally in explanations of what they have learned, to summarize what they have learned, to discuss key words of what they have learned, to dramatize what they have learned. The hope is that they will internalize what they have learned through such determined and varied reinforcement.

Paradoxically, the more able group will be generally slow in their response. Their's is a dilemma of mental calesthenics. Confronted with their "hodgepodge" attempts to function in two cultures, they have developed a language that is often adequate, but nonstandard, in either culture.

The most able group will probably be more Anglo in its philosophy and behavior than the other two groups. But, basically, the child of this group is part of the Mexican culture. It is true that he comes from that part that, because of length of time in the community or economic success of the parents, has replaced or compromised many of the traditional Mexican customs and way of life with Anglo ones. But the child's values, the most difficult part of the child in which to effect changes, and his knowledge of his Mexican extraction mixed with his awareness of additional conflicts, will determine much of his classroom attitude and achievement. In working with individuals of this group, the teacher is compelled to understand that the youngster truly wants to assimilate, but just as truly he does not want assimilation at the sacrifice of identity. Therefore, in a program outlined for him, the teacher must point out that the child can succeed and achieve the highest goal possible. The teacher must demand of him the limits of his potential. The essence of the matter is that a teacher must identify the individuality of each student in terms of Mexican culture.

Considering the variety of students, it is almost inevitable that the teacher will eventually face the issue of control. Knowledge of the Mexican culture will indicate to the teacher that these children respond best to a disciplined situation, with overtones of formality. In other words, a Mexican-American child sees a teacher as a person similar in authority to his father in the family situation. The teacher is, in psychological terms, an authority figure. But the teacher's responsibility is to see that the authority reflects understanding, fairness, and acceptance. A great disservice is done to a child when the teacher displays a leniency toward habits that fail to conform to classroom or school routines: tardiness, neglect of deadlines, failure to come to class.

A matter that could lead to complete breakdown of communication between the teacher and his students is the "embarrassment" of the child by the teacher. Once again, it is informative to note that the Spanish language has no equivalent for the word "embarrass." For instance, a person "embarasada" (past participle acting as an adjective) is pregnant. In Spanish there are expressions for turning red as a result of receiving a compliment (ruborisarse), for getting one's self in a situation (comprometerse); otherwise, to embarrass is literally to dishonor (deshonrar, insultar, infamar). The fact that there is no Spanish word should indicate that the speakers of the language do not treat lightly loss of stature. When a teacher finds it necessary to discipline by heaping guilt on a youngster, he should never do it in front of the youngster's peers. Such disciplinary action must always remain an individual confrontation, handled without witnesses.

A few examples of applied understanding have been described in the latter part of this discussion. The solution to the teacher's problems of educating Mexican-American students is a broad understanding of the students' background and culture, accompanied by a specific appreciation of the individual student's place in that heritage. Such understanding and appreciation will make it possible for the teacher to help destroy the stereotype, identify and acknowledge the basis for observed problems in school behavior, and come face to face with the student himself. In this way, the teacher can provide the guidance and leadership desperately needed by culturally disadvantaged Mexican-American students.

PART III: THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUERTO RICAN STUDENT

In the preceding section attention was focused on culturally disadvantaged Mexican-American students. In this section, the focus of attention shifts to culturally disadvantaged Puerto Rican students. These two groups--Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans--have similar cultural backgrounds, and much of the description of the cultural background of Mexican-American students given in the preceding section generally describes the cultural background of Puerto Ricans, too. For example, Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans have similar value systems, outlook on life, language, family structure, etc. The reason is obvious: the cultures of both groups stem from cultural roots that are Spanish. The Spanish roots of Puerto Rican culture points out another similarity between Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans: both groups are culturally different, and if individuals are culturally disadvantaged also, this compounds their problems of becoming assimilated and gaining full participation in our society. The similarity between the cultural background of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans will become apparent throughout this section.

There is, however, an important factor that must be kept in mind when recognizing the similarity between the cultural background of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans: the Spanish cultural roots have never been as deep for Puerto Ricans as they have for Mexican-Americans. Thus, Puerto Ricans tend not to hold on as tenaciously to the cultural patterns they bring with them from Puerto Rico as Mexican-Americans seem to hold on to their cultural patterns. This means that Puerto Ricans are more susceptible to assimilation and acquisition of American cultural patterns than Mexican-Americans. For example, Puerto Ricans are more anxious to learn English than Mexican-Americans, and they seem to be not as anxious as Mexican-Americans to have their children learn or retain Spanish. In fact, Puerto Ricans seem much more anxious than Mexican-Americans to become like the dominant culture in all areas. Their willingness to become acculturated helps them avoid the contradiction so often implied by Mexican-American spokesmen of wanting full assimilation while completely retaining their own cultural identity.

Probably the weakness of the influence of the Spanish cultural roots is a partial explanation. But there is a more potent factor operating to facilitate acculturation: Puerto Ricans are already American citizens, and this gives them an automatic loyalty to America and its institutions. Also, the Puerto Rican population in America is overwhelmingly urban, and the closeness of urban living makes them much more vulnerable to change than the partially rural, partially urban, Mexican-American population. Thus, by the second generation, Puerto Ricans are more "American" than they are "Puerto Rican"; second generation Mexican-Americans, and even third generation Mexican-Americans, are bothered by the problems of cultural ambivalence.

Of course, the extent of acculteration for individuals of both groups is conditioned by their socioeconomic status. That is, if an individual is culturally and economically disadvantaged he cannot become fully acculturated. He is a member of the general "subculture of poverty" that has developed in America, having as much in common with other disadvantaged individuals, regardless of cultural or ethnic identity, as with more fortunate individuals who are members of his parent culture. This is the case for too many Puerto Ricans: the subculture they have developed in response to conditions here in America has made them neither culturally Puerto Rican, nor American middle class. Instead, too many are swept into the ranks of the disadvantaged where they join Negroes, Mexican-Americans, Appalachian and Southern white migrants, and American Indians. The general reasons Puerto Ricans are disadvantaged are the same as those listed in Unit One. In addition, the general characteristics of the culturally disadvantaged outlined in Unit Two also describe culturally disadvantaged Puerto Ricans. In this section the focus will be on some of the specific characteristics of culturally disadvantaged Puerto Ricans. Again, it must be pointed out that Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans have a great deal of similarity in cultural background.

The Great Migration

The island of Puerto Rico has had a long history of poverty. The Spanish, who possessed the island before the United States, neglected its economic development and the United States did little to improve economic conditions until recently. Throughout this history of poverty, the people of Puerto Rico suffered. To the north sat the fat rich land of America whose opportunity seemed to be waiting. Thus, many of the same conditions that drew Europeans to America's shores stimulated Puerto Ricans to migrate to America. In addition, there were other factors that facilitated the Puerto Rican migration: first, Puerto Ricans, as American citizens, gained easy entrance to America; second, the short distance between America and Puerto Rico was further shortened by the airplane. The Puerto Rican migration has been called the first airborne migration in history. The shortened distance has also made it easy for Puerto Ricans in the United States to "commute" to the island, and many do. The trip is only a few hours by plane from the major Puerto Rican centers in America. The short distance has also tended to "culturally feed" the Puerto Ricans in America and, if it wasn't for this, Puerto Ricans would probably be "less Puerto Rican" than they are.

Although the Puerto Rican migration is similar in many ways to the earlier European migration, there are some important differences that prevent many Puerto Ricans from becoming easily assimilated and rising out of their disadvantaged position. First, Puerto Ricans have migrated at a time when there is not a manpower shortage, and many of them have difficulty finding employment. When they do, they often have to take the low-paying unskilled jobs. Second, Puerto Ricans have migrated after the technological revolution and many of the kinds of jobs that were available to European immigrants no longer exist because of automation. Third, many Puerto Ricans are classified as Negroes in this country, and these Puerto Ricans

acquire the traditional employment difficulties of Negroes. These are the main points of differences between the Puerto Rican migration and the former European migration that keep Puerto Ricans at the bottom of the economic scale and chronically culturally disadvantaged (most of these reasons apply to Mexican-Americans, also).

The Puerto Rican migration has been rapid, especially after World War II. In 1930, there were about 45,000 Puerto Ricans in the United States; this number increased to about 70,000 by 1940; by 1950, there were more than 250,000 Puerto Ricans in the United States; the 1960 census listed over 600,000 Puerto Ricans in New York City.[1]

Currently, the estimates are that there are well over a million Puerto Ricans in the United States. The high birthrate of Puerto Ricans will increase this number. Most of the Puerto Ricans who came to this country settled in a few large Northern cities, and the greatest number settled in New York City. Arriving in the cities, Puerto Ricans squeezed into the crowded slums of these big cities with other disadvantaged groups, usually taking over part of the slums for their own community--el barrio Latino.

A typical pattern of migration is this: The father goes to America, lives with friends or relatives until he finds a job and a place to live. Then the mother and children join him. Sometimes the children come one by one, or in small groups. This spaced migration results in varying degrees of adjustment to American life within the same family.

Puerto Ricans can be roughly divided into three groups: the first of these, the old residents, migrated to this country prior to World War II; the second group are those who were born in this country or who came here when they were very young; the third group are the recent migrants. These three groups show varying degrees of acculturation. The old residents and the recent migrants tend to adhere closely to the Puerto Rican culture of the island. The Puerto Ricans who were born here or raised here tend to lose many of the cultural patterns of the island, and acquire many of the cultural patterns similar to other disadvantaged groups, but influenced by their Puerto Rican background.

Problems of Participating in the Dominant Culture

The obvious problems for Puerto Ricans of fully participating in American life are caused by their different cultural background. Like Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans are products of a different culture that deviates further from the dominant culture than the subcultures disadvantaged Negroes and Appalachian and Southern white migrants have developed in response to the particular conditions under which they live. It has been pointed out

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[1]Nathan Glazer and Patrick Daniel Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1963), pp. 91-94.

that Puerto Ricans seem to be more adaptable to change than Mexican-Americans, even though individuals from both groups are products of different cultures. Still, Puerto Ricans come from a cultural background that has a different value system, a different outlook on life, a different language, a different family structure--and these differences place them at a greater disadvantage, perhaps, than Negroes (for example) who have altered cultural patterns.

For example, the native language of Puerto Ricans is Spanish. The difficulties of full participation in the dominant culture and advancing in the dominant culture for individuals who speak a foreign language are obvious. Puerto Ricans are acutely aware of these difficulties, and they are anxious to learn English. In fact, most Puerto Ricans prefer English to Spanish. This is different from Mexican-Americans, who often complain that Spanish is not given enough emphasis in school. In spite of the preference for English and the desire to learn English, many Puerto Rican children come to school not really fluent in either Spanish or English. They speak a kind of English heavily influenced by Spanish (Spanglish) that causes them difficulties in school, especially in reading.

It has been pointed out that some Puerto Ricans suffer the same kind of racial discrimination that Negroes suffer. Racially, Puerto Ricans are a mixture of Caucasian (Spanish), Indian, and Negro stock. The scale of physical appearance of these three races is a continuous blend. At one end of the scale are Puerto Ricans who are typically Caucasian, and at the other end are Puerto Ricans who are typically Negro. In the middle are Puerto Ricans who are a blend of the two ends. Those whose physical appearance are Negro are often doubly victimized by being Puerto Rican and Negro. Often this is a shock for them and this situation, unfortunately, has caused some conflict between Negroes and Puerto Ricans. The Negroes resent the Puerto Ricans who refuse to be identified with them even though they look like Negroes, and the Puerto Ricans resent being classified with Negroes because they realize the stigma this classification carries.

The Family

The structure of the Puerto Rican family closely resembles the structure of the Mexican-American family. Ideally, the Puerto Rican family consists of: the father, who holds all authority and the responsibility of supporting the family; the mother, who upholds the father's authority and the respect his position demands; and the unmarried children. Ideally, the father is the strongest figure in the Puerto Rican family. Early marriage is common among Puerto Ricans, especially on the island. One investigator found that seven out of ten Puerto Ricans were married before they were twenty-one, many before they were eighteen.[1] This pattern of early marriage probably contributes to the high dropout rate of Puerto Rican students.

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[1] Ibid., p. 89.

Like Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans have the institution of the extended family that includes grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and the institution of compadre and comadre (co-parents) all bound up in a tightly organized unit. All demands of this unit preempt the demands of anything else.

Within the family, children are supposed to be completely subservient to the parents. They are supposed to love, honor, and respect their parents; they are supposed to be "good," and this means they are supposed to be "seen but not heard" and do what they are told. Independence and self-reliance are not to be encouraged in children. Boys are to develop machisimo, girls are to be protected.

The family structure described here is the ideal; urban living tends to break this down. Also, the length of time in this country contributes to its breakdown--Puerto Rican parents born or raised in this country tend to move away from this structure. In addition, the different demands of American society--and particularly urban American society--tend to break down the traditional family structure. This kind of family structure is oriented to the demands of a Puerto Rican society, and it doesn't work for American society. For example, independence and self-reliance are positive attributes in American society, and children who are discouraged from developing these attributes will be at a disadvantage. In addition, this kind of attitude toward the role of children (including the undemocratic structure of many Puerto Rican families) conflicts with the teachings of the school. In school, children are encouraged to participate in planning sessions with the teachers, and they are also encouraged to develop initiative and self-reliance. Many Puerto Rican parents don't understand the attitude of the school on these matters. Another concept of the Puerto Rican family that doesn't work to their advantage here in America is the concept of machisimo--that is, the encouragement of "manliness" in boys. Like Mexican-Americans, Puerto Rican boys are supposed to exhibit those qualities that are identified with a male role. In the city, however, boys often show their machisimo in ways that get them into trouble. Thus, this doesn't work to the advantage of Puerto Ricans. Also, the close proximity to other groups created by slum living helps break down traditional family structure by presenting alternate and more "Americanized" patterns of family structure. Finally, the mild resistance that many Puerto Ricans have to change, especially when "change" means "more American," helps break down traditional family structure.

The Culturally Disadvantaged Puerto Rican Student and the School

Puerto Ricans generally have a high regard for education. Like most Americans, Puerto Ricans see education as a means for raising one's status. On this point, they differ from Mexican-Americans who generally do not have this kind of positive attitude toward the educational process. Unfortunately, many culturally disadvantaged Puerto Ricans do not know how to express their

positive attitude toward education through actions that support the educational process. Too often, their disadvantaged position works against them in all the debilitating ways pointed out in previous units.

The positive attitude toward education that many Puerto Rican parents have is often reflected in the high aspirations they have for their children. For example, Puerto Rican parents often boast that their child will be a doctor, a lawyer, a "great man," not just an ordinary workman. Most of the time these high aspirations are pitiful, almost tragic, when they are contrasted with the circumstances of deprivation that tear out the foundations of any aspirations parents might have for their children. One of the most important functions of the school is to help the children realize the expectations of their parents.

Even though most Puerto Rican parents have a positive attitude toward education, their attitude on how the education process should be conducted often conflicts with the actual practice of the school. This is particularly true of Puerto Rican parents whose basic orientation is toward a Puerto Rican society rather than an American society. For example, some Puerto Rican parents who are not "Americanized" look to the school as a parent surrogate--that is, they see the school as taking the complete place of the parent once the child enters its doors. To some extent this is true, but not to the degree that these parents feel. Another area of conflict between some Puerto Rican parents and the school is over the informal and democratic ways of the American classroom. For some Puerto Rican parents, the American classroom is conducted too informally; these parents want the schools to be conducted in a formal authoritarian way. A third area of conflict is between cultural patterns of Puerto Ricans and the cultural patterns advanced by the school. This kind of conflict is sometimes called "culture clash." For example, the parents and the school have differing practices on the following: children drinking coffee; children calling teachers by their names (Puerto Ricans think this shows a lack of respect for the teacher); children participating in a discussion with the teacher (Puerto Ricans think this, also, shows a lack of respect). Of course, "culture clash" on these particular examples is not common between the school and <u>all</u> Puerto Rican parents; this kind of "culture clash" is more common between the school and recently arrived Puerto Ricans and those not "Americanized." The kind of <u>general</u> conflict that occurs between the middle-class oriented school and its culturally disadvantaged students, however, <u>is</u> common.

Many of these areas of conflict between the school and culturally disadvantaged Puerto Rican students can be eased if classroom teachers first understand the concept of deprivation and, second, understand the cultural background of Puerto Rican students.

PART IV: CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED APPALACHIANS AND SOUTHERN WHITE MIGRANTS

The culturally disadvantaged Caucasian is probably the most ne
disadvantaged groups in terms of the amount of literature devoted tglected of
problems, the recognition given to their problems, and the educatio their
grams designed to improve their status. The federal government, im pro-
years, has become increasingly active in the role of helping cultur recent
advantaged Caucasians, particularly those living in that vast poverally dis-
called Appalachia, but the help of the federal government has mostlty region
one dimension--economic aid. There does not seem to be the same cy been of
cultural enrichment and educational advancement for culturally disancern for
Caucasians as there is for other disadvantaged groups. This situadvantaged
in spite of the great numbers of this group who can be classified tion exists
ally disadvantaged. It has been pointed out that income is the mos cultur-
criterion of cultural deprivation. Though income is not necessarist common
tirely accurate criterion for determining cultural deprivation, itly an en-
best single measure of cultural deprivation available. Using inco is the
measure of cultural deprivation, the number of culturally disadvane as a
dividuals is between 40 and 50 million, depending on the minimum itaged in-
as a cutoff point. Regardless of the total number of the disadvancome used
lation, Caucasians are roughly half of this population. Thus, Cautaged popu-
the largest ethnic group among the disadvantaged. There seems to bcasians are
of factors acting in concert that account for less awareness of the a number
taged Caucasian. e disadvan-

For one thing, disadvantaged Caucasians are not highly visib
disadvantaged Negroes, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Indie. Unlike
have more or less distinguishable physical features that set them ns, who
the dominant Caucasian population, disadvantaged Caucasians blend off from
tibly with the dominant population. Their lack of visibility may imperceptibly
to the lack of awareness others have for them. Another contributcontribute
to this lack of awareness is that disadvantaged Caucasians have mng factor
than other disadvantaged groups: they are not segregated because re freedom
race, and they have easier access into the dominant culture simpl of their
they do not carry the handicap of a stimulus for other people's p because
Most disadvantaged Caucasians, particularly those from Appalachiaejudice.
rural areas of the South, are Anglo-Saxon and protestant; this gi and the
definite advantage over the other disadvantaged groups discussed.ves them a
factor that contributes to the lack of awareness is that disadvan A third
casians are less vocal. Many of them have a tradition of stubbortaged Cau-
dence, and they do not protest their deprivation in the dramatic n indepen-
for example, Negroes. Instead, many suffer deprivation in "quietways as,
tion." Finally, many disadvantaged Caucasians live in an area odespera-
that is somewhat isolated and hidden from the sight of the rest the country
try. This area is called Appalachia. Other disadvantaged Caucasf the coun-
in Southern rural areas that have traditionally been associated vians live
tion, perhaps so long now that deprivation in this area has becoith depriva-
and unnoticeable. e natural

Still, the problem of culturally disadvantaged Appalachians and Southern whites has become increasingly in focus because of the vast migrations of these two groups from their homes to the cities. This movement has focused more attention on their plight, and it has also created problems for the migrants by bringing them into contact with an urban society for which they are ill prepared. In addition, the educational problems of these people have been revealed in the migration.

The area called Appalachia stretches roughly from the Eastern seaboard to the Midwest, and it includes parts of the following states: West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia. The heart of this area is the Appalachian mountains, and this is the section with the most extensive poverty. Actually, these mountains run through only a few states, but the entire poverty area surrounding these mountains has been termed "Appalachia" and the term has become synonymous with "poverty."

Before the word took on this new meaning, most people probably thought of it only as an area of great beauty with gently rolling mountains covered with deep green growth, blue streams plunging into lush valleys, and inhabited by happy hillbillys. The area is physically beautiful, and its physical beauty is ironic when it is contrasted with the desperate population that lives in the area. The features that make the area beautiful are exactly the kinds of land features that make farming difficult and unproductive. In addition, the coal mining industry that once provided employment for many people in this area slowed down almost to a complete stop, and there are not enough industries in the area to take up the slack and provide additional employment.

Almost every dimension of poverty and cultural deprivation touches many people in Appalachia. The people are not the happy hillbillys romanticized and symbolized by Lil' Abner--they are desperate individuals trying to scratch out a living on unproductive farms, or they are huddled in barren, dirty little towns sitting like tombstones on top of dead mines. The whole Appalachian area manages to stay alive on a "welfare economy."

The other area of the country having large numbers of disadvantaged Caucasians is the rural South. Some of this area is included in the proverty area designated as Appalachia, but much of it is in the cotton and tobacco belts of the South. The people living in this area share the same kinds of marks of deprivation with other disadvantaged groups: low income, poor health, substandard housing, low educational level, etc. These are the characteristics of disadvantaged people. The disadvantaged Caucasians in the rural South also share another characteristic with disadvantaged rural groups: many leave the farms and go to the cities. The reasons they migrate are obvious and classic: they go to the cities to improve their economic status.

During the 1950s, over 1,500,000 people left Appalachia to seek another life in the large industrial cities of the North. These were the young and adventurous, and they drained off the lifeblood of the area leaving it more dead than ever. Most of the migrants, however, left one kind of poverty for another: from the hills and pastures of poverty of Appalachia, they plunged

into the canyons of poverty of the big city slums. They usually settled in areas of the cities where others like them have settled. Thus, they create their own little pockets of poverty--a kind of new ghetto--in the big city. Many are unable to qualify for the sophisticated jobs of modern urban industry, and they find that the nonskill jobs are occupied by Negroes or other disadvantaged groups who arrived earlier. Some migrants return to Appalachia or the South, but many stay in the cities and struggle to make a living. The only thing that really changes for those who stay is the geography of their poverty.

But the change in geography creates additional problems. These migrants are thrown into an urban society that is alien to them and conflicts with their rural cultural patterns. They are unable to participate in the culture of their new setting--thus, they are culturally disadvantaged. The cultural characteristics of Appalachian and Southern white migrants can be summarized in the following way.

1. They have strong family ties and connections with people of "their own kind." They are clannish, preferring "home folks" (people with similar or same backgrounds) to others.

2. They are suspicious of outsiders, and they often shun the help of outside agencies.

3. They practice fierce individualism, even in the face of adverse poverty and deprivation.

4. Their clannishness cuts them off from meaningful contacts with the dominant culture and perpetuates primary group relationships. This restricts their chances for assimilation; and even though they are not handicapped by a negative racial identity, their chances for assimilation are almost as limited as other disadvantaged people who are restricted by race.

5. They are stoics, and they do not openly express suffering or hardship. This characteristic is probably due to their fierce individualism, and it is probably the reason they do not seek the help of outside agencies.

6. The father is usually the authoritarian figure in the family, while the mother is the center of love in the family. Children are usually assigned definite roles and duties in the family, and this tendency is probably a carry-over from the "chore oriented" view of children in a rural setting. In the city, "chores" are often limited, and the children go about on their own and often unsupervised (another carry-over from a rural setting).

Their culture background has developed in a rather isolated environment presenting few of the kinds of experiences that supplement education. In addition, they usually do not see the value of education; instead, they feel that a minimum amount of education is all one needs--just a little reading and writing. They are much more indifferent to education, as a group,

than disadvantaged Negroes or Puerto Ricans. This indifference makes them much more uncooperative with the school, also.

Students from this background often cause teachers more problems in discipline than other disadvantaged students. Their fiercely independent attitude makes them resist authority. Their resistance usually does not take the form of overt aggression; they are more likely to resist authority with a stubborn sullenness.

Finally, disadvantaged Appalachians and Southern white migrants can also be described by the general characteristics of the culturally disadvantaged discussed in Unit Two. Of all the disadvantaged groups discussed, however, disadvantaged Appalachians and Southern white migrants have the best chance of being assimilated into the dominant culture because of their racial identity. Education could be the means for them to accomplish this comparatively easy assimilation. Ironically, their attitudes on education are much more negative, in some ways, than the attitudes of other disadvantaged groups. Thus, their chances for assimilation are just as restricted. Perhaps instructional programs for them should begin with efforts to change their attitudes toward the educational process.

PART V: CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED AMERICAN INDIANS

Another ethnic group that is associated with cultural deprivation is the American Indian. American Indians are probably the country's first disadvantaged group. Since the establishment of the first settlement at Jamestown in 1610, American Indians have improved their status very little in relation to the dominant culture. Their way of life--their culture--did not prepare them to resist the debilitating effect resulting from contact with another culture. Historical and social factors have prevented them from being assimilated into the dominant culture. The irony in this cultural relationship is that American Indian culture is indigenous to this land.

There are over 500,000 Indians in the United States. Approximately three-fourths of them live in rural areas, and most of these rural areas are parts of reservations located in the South and Southwest sections of the country. Although their numbers are not large, their deprivation is great: for example, the almost totally absent middle class, the amount of government welfare funds spent on Indians in relation to their per capita income, their educational level, average life span, the rate of tuberculosis are all indexes of the American Indians' deprivation.

Because their numbers are small, it may appear that a discussion of the Indians' educational needs is not important here--few teachers in public schools work with Indian children. However, a discussion of Indians will further illustrate how a different and unexpected cultural background handicaps learning--especially if teachers ignore the difference. The great gap between Indian culture and the dominant culture clearly illustrates this concept.

American Indians, like Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, are products of a different culture. Furthermore, their cultural background is so completely different from the dominant culture that they are probably the least prepared of disadvantaged groups to participate in the dominant culture. To complicate matters, there are numerous nations--or cultures--of American Indians, all culturally different, to a greater or lesser degree, from one another. Many mistakes in the past in dealing with Indians have been the result of treating all Indian cultural groups as if they were exactly alike.

The enduring difference between Indian culture and the dominant culture has made assimilation impossible for the bulk of the American Indian population. Of course, there are other factors that have helped to prevent assimilation: racial prejudice and geographic isolation are two of these factors. Geographical isolation in the form of the reservation system has especially prevented the assimilation process from beginning. The reservation system has tended to decrease contact between Indians and the dominant culture; thus, the reservation system arrests assimilation, perpetuates cultural isolation, and sustains the Indians' disadvantaged position.

One solution to the problem sometimes mentioned is that Indians be taken off the reservations and made to sink or swim in the dominant cultural mainstream. Those who suggest this kind of plunge for the Indian point to the Negro as an example of how successful this method of assimilation can be. The Negro is, without a doubt, not as disadvantaged as the Indian; however, those who recommend that the Indian be thrust into the dominant culture fail to realize that the Negro, even under slavery, was more acculturated than Indians. Slavery afforded a better apprenticeship for acculturation than the reservation system. The advocates of immediate assimilation fail to recognize the inhibiting factors for assimilation the Indian carries from his cultural background. The most significant of these factors is an entirely different value system: the value system of American Indian culture is opposed to the highly competitive specialized American value system. In short, Indians simply can't survive with their value system--or way of life--in direct competition with the dominant culture. Yet, many Indians are going to be presented with the challenge of "making it" in the dominant culture. Population growth is forcing many Indians off the reservation.

Education has an obvious and necessary role in helping American Indians improve their status. Of course, education can't accomplish this alone. Many changes in the society, particularly the attitude the dominant culture holds toward Indians and the overt discriminatory acts stemming from this attitude, will have to occur before education can be wholly effective. Also, the basic needs of the Indian population must be satisfied before the educational catalyst can really accelerate the assimilation process. Still, education is probably the most important means for improving the status of Indians.

The federal government has primary responsibility for educating Indians. Part of the problem in the past in educating Indians has been that the schools sometimes educated them to be Indians who live on reservations. This, in effect, did not prepare them to compete within the dominant culture if they left the reservation. On the other hand, Indian children educated to live in the dominant culture often were not able to compete, either. They were not able to overcome their strong cultural ties, and this prevented them from successfully competing in the dominant culture. At the same time, their education made it difficult for them to return to their own culture. Thus, Indian children educated in this manner were doubly disadvantaged. Fortunately, the federal government has recognized both the problems of educating Indian children for reservation life and educating Indian children to participate in the dominant culture while denying their cultural background, and better educational programs for Indians have been devised. These new programs recognize the importance for Indian children to retain their cultural identity; these programs also recognize the necessity of starting with the cultural background of Indian children to develop the skills they need to participate in the dominant culture. With these skills, Indian children gain a kind of passport into the dominant culture, and continued contact with the dominant culture can help them acquire the kind of practical understanding necessary for assimilation. Of course, assimilation will proceed slowly this way.

When efforts to educate Indians have failed, the reasons usuall
be traced to the most common cause for failure in educating disadvar can
children--that is, not enough consideration has been given to the c aged
background of the disadvantaged children in the educational program tural
has been especially true for Indian children, and examples of the la This
consideration in educational programs for their cultural background k of
fies the importance of this kind of consideration for all culturally lari-
advantaged children. Teachers have often placed Indian children in dis-
ations that are inconsistent with Indian culture. For example, the itu-
of grading is inconsistent with the noncompetitive culture of many ystem
grades embarrass both the achievers and nonachievers. In fact, any dians:
room activity that reveals a difference in achievement embarrasses ass-
dian children (discussions, recitations, teacher comments, games, e ny In-
Other examples of the school placing Indian students in situations .).
sistent with their culture are: giving boys and girls the same act icon-
(division of labor is often strictly defined by sex in Indian cultu ities
ing Indian students participate in activities, such as coed dancing); hav-
violate tribal or cultural taboos; failing to define clearly the di that
between work and play--Indian students and their parents often have ference
culty distinguishing between activities leading to learning and pla diffi-
problem of educating Indian students, then, is the universal proble The
educating culturally disadvantaged students: education must take a of
of the peculiar cultural background of disadvantaged students. count

The most serious problem, however, of educating Indian student
that to develop the patterns for participation in the dominant cult is
tact with the dominant culture is necessary to use and test these p re, con-
As long as many Indian children are restricted to reservation livin tterns.
contact is severely limited. They are likely to remain disadvantag , this
they continue to live on the reservation, because they cannot "lear d if
dominant culture in the kind of isolation created by reservation li" the
ving.

Thus, greater contact with the dominant culture and education
be the means for eliminating the disadvantage of Indians--but this eem to
the Indians with a terrible and awesome choice: they must step out resents
culture in which they are secure into a drastically different cultu of a
which their background has not prepared them. ce for

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Cultural deprivation and minority group membership are not synonymous; however, chances of being disadvantaged are increased if an individual is a member of a minority group.

2. Culturally disadvantaged Negro and Caucasian students are products of subcultures; culturally disadvantaged Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and American Indian students are products of different cultures.

3. Mexican-American and Puerto Rican students show varying degrees of Americanization, depending on: their length of time in this country; the number of generations of American citizenship; the education and economic level of their parents; their family and personal ambitions; and the degree that social barriers are present in locations where they live.

4. Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and American Indian students are put in the difficult position of trying to straddle two cultures; sometimes this straddling does not permit them to plant a firm footing in either.

5. The minority ethnic groups discussed in this unit have had a particularly difficult time becoming assimilated and acculturated.

6. Even though the cultural backgrounds of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans have Spanish roots, Puerto Ricans tend not to cling as strongly to their Spanish cultural roots as Mexican-Americans. Perhaps, the fact that they are American citizens by birth helps them to become assimilated more readily.

7. Puerto Ricans are overwhelmingly urban; the majority of the Puerto Rican population lives in New York City.

8. The foreign language background of many Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and American Indian students severely handicaps their achievement in school.

9. Social and economic deprivation tends to break down traditional cultural values while preventing the development of many of the values of the dominant culture.

10. The problems of culturally disadvantaged Caucasians have received little attention proportionate to their number.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the difficulty of adjusting or getting along in the dominant culture (including the curriculum of the school) for: (a) students who are products of a subculture; and (b) students who are products of a different culture. Which students would have the most difficulty? Why?

2. Discuss some of the difficulties in discipline, role identification, self-concept and value orientation for students who come from strong patriarchal family structures who attend femininely dominated schools.

3. The school is the institution for "Americanizing" individuals. Yet, some students who come from different cultures may not be able or willing to abandon many of their native cultural patterns, even when these patterns place them at a disadvantage. How far should the schools go in Americanizing students from other cultures? Put another way, how much of the native culture should the schools reinforce and teach?

4. Many ethnic groups have attained assimilation relatively fast compared to the ethnic groups discussed in Units Three and Four. What are some of the main factors that prevent the ethnic groups discussed in Units Three and Four from assimilating as fast as other groups? What can the schools do to help the situation?

5. Of the ethnic groups discussed in Units Three and Four, which one will have the most difficulty becoming assimilated or acculturated?

6. If a "hierarchy of educational needs" could be listed for each of the groups discussed in this unit, what needs would be at the top of the list? Are the schools now equipped and organized to meet these needs?

7. Has the reservation system worked to the advantage or disadvantage of American Indian students? Why?

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